

Washington, DC -- Today, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) denounced the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) decision to reject the State of New York's application to provide health insurance for additional uninsured children.

"I find it unacceptable that the Administration would reject New York State's request to expand health care coverage to thousands of uninsured children, especially while the number of uninsured children across the country is at an all-time, record high," **said Arcuri**. "Now is the time to focus on ensuring health care coverage for more children, not fewer. As a father, I know the worry parents face when a child gets sick and how critical health insurance is to ensure preventative care. By expanding health care to uninsured children in New York, we can improve access to preventative care, decreasing trips to the emergency room and costly, more severe illnesses down the road."

Earlier this week, Arcuri joined other New York representatives in sending a letter to HHS requesting that the Agency rescind unfair requirements imposed on states like New York who sought to extend health insurance to moderate-income families, and that they approve New York State's pending Children's Health Insurance Program (CHPlus) expansion waiver.

"New York State's Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) is one of the best in the country, and New York has made every effort to increase the number of children with health care, starting with the lowest income families," Arcuri said. "Nearly 19,000 children in the counties of the 24th district depend on CHPlus for health insurance. It is a shame that the Administration stands in the way of expanding that number to cover local children who have gone too long without necessary health care."

In their letter to HHS, Arcuri and others stated, "State flexibility is at the heart of the SCHIP program. When Congress enacted the law 10 years ago it widely recognized that states should be allowed to structure their own programs based on the needs and economic realities of their own citizens."

"Throughout New York, there are too many families with hard-working parents who simply cannot afford skyrocketing health care costs or who have children with special medical needs. It is truly unfortunate that the executive branch would stand in the way of a state's attempt to expand health care for its citizens," the letter continued.

In July, the House passed and Arcuri voted for the CHAMP Act, legislation to help hard-working Americans keep their families healthy by reauthorizing the SCHIP program and expanding states' ability to reach out and cover millions more children.

"It is unacceptable that in the richest country in the world, which spends billions of dollars per week on a war in Iraq, millions of children, many from families with two working parents, are without vital health care," **Arcuri said**. "In the coming months, I will work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address this misguided decision, and make sure New York's children have the health care they need and deserve."

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